The

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

No. 148 OCTOBER, 1919. PRICE THREE HALFPENCE
2s. per annum post free

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Notes of the Month.

Thanksgiving for harvest surely needs no recommendation this year. People everywhere have rejoiced in the blessings of an exceptional summer. Relief from the cares and anxieties of war has found its fitting reflection and accompaniment in natural conditions. Even if here and there the croaker mentions the want of rain, or even indicates things which might have been the better for abundant showers, the fact still remains that generally speaking the harvests are satisfactory. It is meet therefore that we should be glad and give united expression to our thankfulness of heart.

* *

With the present month our winter activities will commence in real earnest, and we hope that they may prove highly fruitful. This will be the first winter since 1914 that the character of our work will not be determined by war objects. Since many normal movements have had to take a subordinate place now is the time to re-start them on old or improved lines. Social schemes and plans of work will have a new significance. The feeling of unity engendered by the war will crave for fuller expression. It is not our function to suggest the particular forms in which the spirit will embody itself. That is the more fitting function of those whose knowledge of local conditions and needs will suggest the appropriate form. Naturally, the first endeavour will be to restore and re-construct. But supreme importance will attach to labours on behalf of the young. Never were children a greater asset than now, and their education and moral upbringing is a task of pressing and prime significance. Further, we must endeavour to enlist the energy and enthusiasm of the young people on behalf of our churches and their institutions. It is to them we must increasingly look for help and support if our congregational activities are not to languish and decay. Their capacity for whole-hearted endeavour was proved in past days, it must be utilised and profitably employed not less in the present and future.

* *

In Belfast and district an instrument exists for enlisting and directing the service of the young. We refer to the Unity Guild, which has done good things in the past and is hopeful for better during the coming winter. Starting with a large and growing member-

ship, it should reap where it has formerly sown. Further, it hopes to foster the work of a younger and still immature organisation, the Social Service Union. By means of monthly lectures on social questions, such as the New Health Act and its far-reaching applications, assisted by Study Circles where such philanthropic measures can be studied in detail, this new society will try to educate and create that great desideratum of to-day, an intelligent and sensitive social conscience. Its appeal is to all our churches and we trust that wherever possible attempts will be made to work in hearty co-operation with its proposals. Beginning with our own church and membership, there is no reason why wider schemes of co-operation with other bodies should not present themselves. It is in these and in the cordial co-operation of all earnest, practical Christians that the hope of union lies. We sincerely trust that during the coming winter much may be accomplished in this direction, for never was there greater need of co-operation and co-ordination in furtherance of the work of God's Kingdom on Earth.

* *

The tragically sudden death of Mr. J. F. Mulligan, of Belfast, has removed from active worldly life a devoted member of our community. To his own congregation of All Souls his loss is exceedingly great. He served its interests devotedly during a very long period of years, but during that time he took the keenest interest in the work of our community generally and served on various committees with great acceptance. We can only express our own sincere sorrow and tender to his relatives and friends our sincere sympathy.

"WANTED:—A NEW MORAL MOMENTUM."

By Rev. H. J. ROSSINGTON, M.A., B.D.

What is meant by "Momentum" in this connection may be seen from a simple illustration. It is recorded of a famous Professor of Science that when lecturing to his students on mechanical laws he made use of the following telling lesson. There hung suspended from the ceiling of the lecture room a huge bar of steel. At first it was merely passive, motionless, inert. But at a certain stage of his lecture he stood near the motionless bar, and then, taking in his hand a number of small paper pellets, he threw them one by one in rapid succession at the mass of steel. At the outset little impression was made by the tiny missiles. Soon however, the bar was seen to move slightly. Before long, that movement became more and more pronounced until the bar swung to and fro in heavy motion. The change was from inertia to momentum, and the process of change was singular and significant. The momentum thus illustrated has its analogies in the world of men and affairs. In commerce a commodity begins to go by means of a like process, a succession of mental impressions is communicated to the consumer until finally his will is moved and the particular article is purchased. It is because of that kind of momentum that many great businesses have been made and are still being made.

If we examine the course of history and try to understand how great moral movements arose, we are at once impressed by the analogy with the mechanical illustration given above. A primary impetus may be given by some individual mind but the movement is constituted by a succession of impulses emanating from many individuals. In this, collective action conforms to individual action, and is merely morality *en masse*, the grouping together for a common aim and end of the thoughts of many minds. What is moral virtue in the individual but the cumulative power and movement of many single acts? Aristotle made this plain for all time and his illustration of the principle is noteworthy. Men come to be builders by building, to be harp-players by playing the harp, so in like manner, by doing just actions men become just, by performing acts of temperance

they become temperate, by doing brave deeds they become brave men. When therefore,we say that " character tells " we simply mean that it has the momentum communicated by many acts, just as the steel bar gained mechanical momentum from the impact of many pellets.

Let us carry the analogy a little further. We often hear it said that the great need of the day is a strong public opinion. But how is such formed? Is its source and origin any other than private opinion? First, an individual mind conceives a new truth, a moving thought. Possessed by the sense of its importance, the thinker communicates his thought to this person and to that. They see its reasonableness, are captivated by its attractiveness, and so become its transmitters. Thus set going, it by degrees leads to the swing of a public opinion that can effect moral wonders and influence for good the destinies of many peoples. In that way, Christianity accomplished its greatest conquests. Beginning with the thought of a Kingdom of Heaven, as conceived by a single mind, it gathered impetus and moving power and made its influence felt far and wide. How illuminating are the words of the great apostle: " For behold your calling, brethren, how that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." Yet as he says, through moral instruments such as these, the Christian gospel received its mighty momentum.

Nor will it be otherwise to-day. More and more it is being made clear that the moral momentum which won us the victory in the recent war was gained gradually and by the cumulative impression and power of many lives. Little by little the stupendous nature of the national task was made plain, and only the ever-increasing area of response to the patriotic motive made possible the longed-for end. Unity of purpose, the common consecration of will, the clear sense of a great and common good —all these constituted the momentum that moved mountains and vindicated mighty moral principles.

Yet now it would seem as if we had lost the essentials. Where unity reigned division now prevails. Selfish and sectarian interests distract thought and dissipate energy. If that be true, we have lost moral momentum. How is it to be regained? Without it, our world has been agitated to no adequate purpose.

It is precisely at this point that history emphasizes a warning. Again and again, the moral energy of mankind has flagged, especially after strenuous and long-sustained effort. The problem then is to supply new moral stimulus. Often this has been sought for in vague high-sounding generalisations—" the greatest good of the greatest number," " enthusiasm for humanity," and many others. But experience shows that these do not supply the need. In the first place, they are too large and too remote to make an appeal to ordinary men and women immersed in every day affairs. Their connection with daily duties is too dimly realised to constitute a practical motive. Hence, while they offer a satisfaction to the mind, they issue no challenge to the will. In the second place, such large moral ends sometimes foster that " telescopic philanthropy " which Dickens satirised in the character of Mrs. Jellyby, whose own children suffered unspeakable misfortunes while she toiled for the far-off natives of Africa. Both these dangers can only be overcome by relating the large end with the little act—by indicating that the good of mankind is but the cumulative good of many individuals of whom the nearest at hand have the prior claim upon our thought and endeavour. It was put in this way by Thomas Hill Green, one of the greatest moral teachers of the last century. Speaking to his students on large moral questions he almost invariably gave them this practical reminder: " There is no other genuine enthusiasm for humanity than one which has travelled the common highway of reason—the life of the good neighbour and the honest citizen, and one can never forget that it is still only a further stage of the same journey." Yes, wherever we

may end that surely is the beginning —the daily life of the good neighbour and the honest citizen. All the unnumbered daily acts which issue in neighbourliness and citizenship constitute the moral momentum of character. When every character tells, by every high and unselfish motive finding its fitting response in the will, when there is a concentration of the common will upon the general good, we shall gain that greater momentum able to remove every obstacle set up by selfish and sectarian interests. Then not by observation, but as a result of united, whole-hearted endeavour, the greatest of moral generalisations will near its realisation and the Kingdom of God will be at hand. But in the meantime every pellet must tell. No single moral impulse, no individual moral character, can be devoid of power without lessening the momentum we now need to solve mighty problems and prepare for a better and purer world. Can we not unitedly, with common will and aim, set the mighty bar swinging?

CAUSES OF MORAL FAILURE.

By John Campbell, M.A., LL.D.

A Bishop of the Church of England has a difficult part to play at the present time. The sworn upholder of a theological system, to which many of the people have become indifferent, has a hard task before him when he essays to explain the moral failure of his church. As the following report shows, the Bishop of London regards division in the Church as the cause of want, power and influence.

The International Brotherhood Congress opened on 14th September, when special services were held in churches of all denominations throughout England. Large congregations attended special services at St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and the City Temple.

Preaching at St. Paul's, the Bishop of London said they could imagine some angel visitant from another world expostulating to-day with the warring nations, warring classes in the nation, and with warring churches, asking, Have you not had enough of it? Has the five years of hell taught you nothing? Do you want another ten million dead to impress upon you the horrors of war between nations? Do you want actually to see happen the ruin of old England, which stares us in the face in consequence of this suicidal war of classes? Do you want revealed again the powerlessness of the Christian Church to avert a crisis to convince you of the moral weakness of a divided Church?

The preacher declared that the reason the Church had so little influence to stop the war, to produce a league of nations, or calm and compose industrial strife was because it was so divided. In his negotiations with the Wesleyan Church they had been careful to safeguard the conscientious convictions of both Churches, and if the outline of union was accepted as he hoped by the official bodies of both Churches, there was no reason why the principles embodied in it should not be applied to every one of the scattered Churches of Christendom. Without giving up one conscientious conviction, or committing one breach of Catholic orders, Christendom might again become one Church. The Church was meant to be the most perfect brotherhood the world had ever seen.

In the opinion of the Bishops, compromise, and the kind of unity which compromise will bring about, are the remedies which will give the Church the respect and control of men and nations. Unfortunately we have but little more than the Bishop's conviction to support that view. The ancient Roman Catholic Church failed to exercise moral influence just as completely as the Protestant Churches have done. The cause of failure lies deeper than the Bishop thinks. From the early days of Christianity until now the Churches have kept before

the people a belief in man-made creeds as the essential of Christianity and have put the teaching of Jesus and the example of his life and death in a position of relative obscurity. Read through the creeds, the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms. Consider how prominently the theories of the theologian are set forth and how little the commands of the Founder of Christianity are emphasised. The whole position requires to be reversed. The actual recorded teaching of Jesus, backed up by the spirit shown by Him in life and death, must be put in the fore-front. In comparison with this, the doctrines of men and the dogmas of Churches are of small account. The Roman Catholic Church stood and stands, primarily, to uphold the authority of the Church as voiced in the decrees of her councils. The Orthodox Protestant Churches make a series of propositions formulated by John Calvin the basis from which their activities spring. They are self-confessed failures as moral agencies. Why? Because, confused by the maze of theology their people have lost sight of the fact that the actual teaching of Jesus Christ is the all-important thing in the Christian religion. The business of the Church of Christ is to enthral the hearts and guide the lives of men and women. Union may bring numerical strength. Compromise may make the Church wealthy and politically powerful. It did all this before the reformation and can do it again. But it is neither "Catholic orders," nor well-filled pews, nor rich endowments, nor social prestige, nor political weight that is required to make a better world. It is little children taught to aspire to live as Jesus did; it is men and women convinced that His teaching and example are for them the only infallible rule of life. Superficial unity is of no use to save the Church of England or any other Church. Absolute devotion to the teaching of Jesus, and to that alone, is called for. The commands of the Master must take precedence of the doctrines of a later date.

THE REVOLT AGAINST CREEDS.

One of our Unitarian church calendars just to hand says: "The creeds of Christendom are as drugs which stupefy the people and hinder progress; they must be destroyed in order that a place may be found for a saner and more human faith."

Most revolts go too far; that is the chief trouble with them. There are few minds sufficiently under control to stop at the right place; like pendulums, they swing to the opposite extreme, and only after ventures into the extremes of experience do they come back to sanity.

After the reign of formal creed in the religious world for many centuries, there has come the revolt and the declaration of independence against all attempts at a statement of belief. So the reckless are shouting for freedom from the domination of creeds, and demanding that life alone shall define our religion. In general, the revolt is to be commended; for in many minds, creeds—rigid and formal—were substituted for life in meeting religious requirements, whereas now we are beginning to recognise that religious beliefs are not substitutes, nor are they the life itself, but are nevertheless vital to the sustaining of the life.

It is true that religion cannot do anything apart from life; yet to get the life we prize we must have for its initiation and for its sustaining, truths which are first brought to us in the form of statements, or confessions, of religious belief—religious truths put to the test of human experience and found by penetrating minds to be reliable and dependable.

True, the demand upon religion should be that it produce life; but to produce life it must feed the soul on such religious beliefs of the ages as have stood the test as lifegivers. It is as true to-day as ever, that "a religion of mutual service is the world's need." Yet it is possible to have mutual service without mutual understanding, without mutual sympathy? How is this to be achieved without some statement of common aim, of common purpose—otherwise *a creed*?

For after all, a creed is merely a confession that one *does* believe something. As a man thinketh, so he is; according to our beliefs—our creeds—do we act. Primarily, therefore, *a* creed of some kind is vital to any "faith" that is worth while.—*The Christian Life.*

SOCIAL SERVICE NOTES.

[The Editor has courteously placed the space under this heading at the disposal of the N.S.P.C.I. Union for Social Service, and the Union will supply material for it regularly every month].

Our Union for Social Service is arranging a very interesting programme for the coming Autumn and Winter. For the first part of the session we intend to devote our attention to the subject of Public Health, in which is included the important matter of Child Welfare. Our first Public Lecture in the Central Hall, on Wednesday, 29th October, will deal with this matter. The lecturer will be Dr. Barry, of Dublin, who is the woman doctor on the Health Council nominated by the All Ireland Medical Committee, and one therefore who is qualified to give us an admirable lecture and who deserves a large audience. The subject of Public Health will occupy us in the Study Circle which begins its meetings in the Central Hall, on Wednesday, 22nd October, and will meet on alternate Wednesdays, after that date. We have been promised the help of such highly competent people as Mr. R. C. Ferguson, M.A., B.L., of the Belfast Council of Social Welfare, Miss Dora Mellone, who is remarkably well-informed on the subject of women's and children's health, and Miss Vaughan, fresh from a visit to Bradford, which is the pioneer English city in the matter of child welfare work. In addition, other public lectures are being arranged and Dr. John Campbell has been secured to lecture on "The Prevention of Infection by Food." Further details will be announced in the next number of the magazine.

I would remind all the members of our churches that a minimum subscription of one shilling will make them members of our union, and entitle them to membership of the Study Circle. In connection with the Study Circle, a very pleasing feature is the co-operation of the Unity Guild, which intends to announce the meetings on its programme and help us in every possible way to make the circle a success. We have by no means a large enough membership nor a big enough subscription list to make our Union as useful as we want, and therefore we would entreat all those who desire to see our church play a practical part in the life of the community to rally to the Union. Miss Montgomery, 18 Wellesley Avenue, Belfast, will be pleased to receive subscriptions and the names of new members.

E. H. PICKERING, Hon. Sec.

Memorial Notices.

MR. J. F. MULLIGAN.

Many friends are sorrowing at the sad news of the sudden death of Mr. J. F. Mulligan, who succumbed to an apoplectic seizure on Monday last, while engaged in his office at 61 Royal Avenue, Belfast.

John Francis Mulligan, who had completed his seventy-fifth year, was born in County Down, near to Dromore, a locality for which his affection was shown in a very interesting historical and descriptive publication. Educated at Queen's College, Belfast, he served his apprenticeship as solicitor with the late Mr. Joseph Dickson, of Dromore, being admitted in 1870. For some time he practised in Banbridge and in Dromore, and about forty-five years ago he settled in Belfast, where he pursued his profession with ability and success. A devoted member of All Soul's Church, he had acted as treasurer of his congregation for many years. On Sunday last he had attended both services as usual. One who knew him well writes that "In the death of Mr. Mulligan, All Souls' has lost one of its members, the Non-Subscribing Church

an intelligent friend, and Belfast a good citizen." Though taking no active part in politics, he was a staunch Unionist, thoroughly convinced of the necessity of maintaining the union between Great Britain and Ireland. In social matters he was an enthusiastic Temperance worker, prominently identified with the Independent Order of Good Templars. He married a sister of Dr. John M'Caw, but was left a widower in June, 1917.

MR. HUGH WARNOCK,

Greyabbey.

By the death of Mr. Hugh Warnock of Ballybrain, Greyabbey, who passed away on the 26th August in the 90th year of his age, our congregation here has lost one of its oldest members, and the community in which he spent his life one of its most respected inhabitants. Deceased leaves a family of six sons and one daughter to mourn his loss. Four of the sons have found homes in the U.S.A. The younger son, who will be remembered by many of our congregations, is Rev. Hugh Warnock at present minister of Stafford Street Chapel, Walsall. We tender our sincere sympathy with the family in their bereavement.

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

[To be used in accordance with the Scheme of instruction for 1919, issued by the Sunday School Committee of the N.S.P.C.I.]

THE JUDGES IN ISRAEL.

October 5th. (I.) *Joshua: The Great Choice.* Read Joshua xxiv. 1–5, 13–28. Key text, Joshua xxiv. 15.

Introduction. Moses was the first of the Judges in Israel and until the time of Saul the Israelites had no king but were ruled by Judges. (*For Senior Scholars.* This form of government is called a Theocracy). God was their only king and the judges interpreted His will to the people. Moses died just before the Israelites reached the Promised Land, and Joshua the son of Nun succeeded him. He led the people to many brilliant victories and now, in his old age, they find themselves in possession of the Promised Land. But before they actually settle there, the grand old chief assembles them together and puts before them certain points which he bids them take to heart. (N.B.—As we learn from the Book of Judges, Israel had not at this time conquered the whole of Canaan. They had got a foothold here and there, but the complete conquest was the work of many generations.) Joshua's poimts are:

1. *God's great mercy and reliability.* Joshua wants the people to remember what we all ought to remember, that whatever we do, God's hand is there and that without Him we could do nothing. In the words of the hymn "Thy hand in all things I behold and all things in Thy hand." We are not to be downcast by sufferings and disappointments, with God's help we shall be all the better for them. Nor are we to become conceited and cocksure in victory and success. God has given them to us for us to do good with. This point can be made clearer for younger scholars by showing them how they are protected and helped by parents and friends, through whom God works. No great good man has ever found God wanting, always his actions have brought some good fruit, even though the fruit may have been long delayed: *e.g.*, Jesus, whose greatest good to us has come through His death.

2. *We must choose, not drift.* See Key text. *For younger scholars:* Story of boy and big ripe pear which hung temptingly near him. He ought to have decided that it was not his, and made the good choice. Instead he touched it just to see if it would fall. *For elder scholars.* In order to make the best possible out of themselves they must *choose* a definite course of life. God is so good that we are mere shirkers if we refuse to choose. All the care that is lavished on us by God through our parents and friends demands that we should choose, and

God will confirm us in our choice. We must face the question: "What sort of man or woman do I intend to be? Read the hymn, "Once to every man and nation." Contrast Hamlet whose tragedy lay in indecision.

3. *Choice must be of the right even though difficult.* A true boy or girl is one who bravely speaks the truth and does the right despite the pain: *e.g.*, The Roman sentry at Pompeii. *For elder scholars.* Note how honestly Joshua put before the people the full obligations of their choice. It is hard to work for God; but, if we trust we shall find the greatest joy: *e.g.*, St. Paul (Philip iii. 12–14) and Browning's "Then welcome each rebuff that turns earth's smoothness rough."

October 12. *Deborah: Israel's backsliding.* Read Judges iv. 1–16. Key text, Jndges, iv. 4.

Introduction. The Israelites did not keep to their choice. As we have seen they were not yet masters of the whole of Canaan, but were scattered here and there among the originals inhabitants. These inhabitants were of different tribes, and each tribe had its own heathen gods. The Israelites for various reasons, perhaps, for example, to curry favour with their neighbours began to mix the worship of their great God Jehovah with the worship of these heathen deities. They tried to serve God and Mammon and in consequence were false to God. One effect of this was that the different tribes of Israel did not act well in common and so they were oppressed because of their weakness. The first thing each Judge who arose had to do was to call them to the pure worship of Jehovah and to fight together for their religion. The Judge had to fuse them together and make them one strong nation. It was in some such way as this that the Swiss won their independence. They were very different but leaders arose who said "Remember, you have this in common. *You are Swiss*, and forgetting your differences you must fight as Swiss." They responded, with the result that they, a small nation, were able to expel the invader and retain their independence. So did the Judges say to Israel "Give up serving the heathen gods of your neighbours and act together as one people, the worshippers of one God, Jehovah."

Points. 1. *The disasters.* The writer of this history believed so firmly in God that he held that all Israel's misfortunes were the work of God. If we do not mean by that that God was a vindictive God, we must admit the truth of this view. If we work without God great disasters come upon us, so that we may learn that we must work with God. Oftentimes the wicked seem to prosper, but only if we take a wrong view of prosperity. For a people which keeps true to God is always strong, if not in worldly possessions, at least in spirit—and *spirit* is an eternal possession. Besides the Israelites could not be truly repentant for their backslidings unless they felt that their sufferings were deserved. It was right they should suffer they declared, and therefore they saw God's hand in their sufferings. *For younger scholars.* Stress the fact that they are not truly sorry for wrongdoing unless they admit that they deserve to be punished. *For elder scholars,* Quote Hegel's great saying "You honour the man in him when you justly punish."

2. *Deborah the woman judge.* This is where the girls have a right to feel very proud of their sex, for here we have a women not only doing man's work, but doing it when the men were afraid to do it. Note how completely Barah depended on her. Women may not have obtained the vote until recent years, but they have played a very important part in history. For instance, among the Jews we have, in addition to Deborah, such women as Miriam (Exod. xv. 20) and Huldah (II Kings. xxii, 14) who also played a great part in their country's destinies. Women also obtained great positions of dignity among the Romans, Greeks, Britons and Teutons. Then we have the famous Joan of Arc, and later Queen Elizabeth. The fact is, God pays no regard to sex when he calls for those who will help Him in His divine purpose. Usually women do

God's work as mothers, nurses, etc., or in such ways as Catherine Fry and Dorothea Dix. But there are times when women have to do what is regarded as men's work for God's purpose to be fulfilled.

October 19. *Gideon and the brave three hundred.* Read Judges vi, 11–15, vii, 1–22. Key text, Judges, vi, 15.

Introduction. At this time the Israelites were over-run by the Midianites. Gideon arose as the defender of his country in the name of God. He had a good cause, the Midianites a bad cause, because they were invaders. N.B. Gideon had to thresh his wheat in secret (in the wine press) lest the enemy should see him. This shows how completely subject the Israelites were to the Midianites. By the angel of God which spoke to Gideon we may understand the voice of God Himself calling him to duty.

1. *The humility of great men.* Key text. Gideon had no ambition to be a leader, because he was deeply conscious of his own short-comings. Therefore he was ready to receive the strength of God. With God he felt invincible.

2. *Discarding the doubters.* When it comes to really serious work, men of faith are needed. The fearful and doubtful only hinder. To fight for God we must trust God ourselves and seek our helpers from those who trust God also.

3. *Gideon's clever strategem.* The enemy thought it must be a mighty host which had so many trumpeters. The moral of this is: Put on a bold front and stand firm. *e.g.,* David and Goliath. The Midianites became frightened and so brought about their own defeat. Sometime ago a very instructive story appeared in the papers about a Boy Scout who captured two thieves. The thieves were running away and when they saw the boy running determinedly after them thought there must be a big crowd following, and so they allowed the Boy Scout to hold them up until some help actually arrived and they were arrested. Their fear and the boy's pluck brought about this result.

4. *The power of a few brave men.* History shows how a few brave, resolute men can save a whole nation, *e.g.,* Leonidas and his brave Spartan three hundred, who held up thousands of Persians at the Pass of Thermopylae. Also, in another way, William Lloyd Garrison and a few supporters saved the American nation by bringing about the abolition of slavery.

October 26. *Jephthah: The Tragedy of a Rash Vow.* Read Judges, xi, 29–40. Key text, Judges, xi, 30–31.

Introduction. Once again the Israelites weak in their faith were powerless against the invader, this time the Ammonites. Like most folk they began to repent under suffering and God showed Himself ever merciful. *For elder scholars.* Note the interesting incident in verses 12 to 28. There we see that at this period the Israelites had not yet come to believe in their God as the one and only God of the whole world. They regarded Jehovah as their God, and their God alone, whilst they admitted the reality of the gods of other nations, *e.g.,* Chemosh, the god of the Ammonites. This is the same as saying for instance that there is an Irish God, an English god, a German god, a French god, and so on. But gradually the Israelites learnt that there is one God alone for all the world; and that is the God of our religion to-day.

1. *The Rash Vow.* Rash vows are like gambling. It is wicked to make promises which we can never fulfil or only at the cost of doing wrong. *e.g.,* When we say "I would give *anything* to be able to do that." This is foolish because it is not in our power to give *anything.* Take the case of the Saxon Harold, who, taken prisoner by Duke William of Normandy is reported to have promised to help William to the throne of England, in order to be set at liberty. This was a very wrong thing to do, for the English people did not want a Norman Duke to be their king, and made Harold himself the king. It is much better to be simply truthful. Jephthah should have been contented with a vow to serve God faithfully. *For elder scholars.* We have to remem-

ber, however, that early Hebrew religion was what has been called " subjunctive religion," *e.g.* " If God will do this for me, I will do that for Him." (See story of Jacob in Genesis xxviii, 20–21), the the aim being to tie God down, as if He were a sort of man making a bargain. Gradually religion was lifted to a higher stage until we reach the pure religion of Jesus. See His teaching on vows. (Matt. v, 33–37).

2. *Jephthah's Integrity.* This was not foolish. The vow was foolish ; but once made, Jephthah felt himself under a solemn obligation to carry it out no matter how great suffering it brought him and his daughter. But we, with our conception of God as Love, would never for one moment feel that He demanded so cruel a sacrifice. This story points to a time when human sacrifice was still practiced. Compare the the story of Abraham and Isaac, and also the Greek story of Agamemnon and Iphigeneia.

3. *The daughter's sublime obedience.* She did not blame her father, for she too believed that a vow was too sacred to be broken. Therefore for her father's sake she offered herself for sacrifice. *For elder scholars.* The Jews felt that a woman had failed in her destiny unless she lived to be a wife and mother. Accordingly Jephthah's daughter did not so much bewail her death as that she must die with her destiny unfulfilled.

E. H. P.

THE SONG OF THE SEA.

Hark to the song of the sea !
Now high, now sinking low,
'Tis wild and careless and free,
And fierce when the gale does blow.
The war and splash of the waves
As they're cleft by the curving bow,
The whine of the gale as it raves
Through the rigging, humming low.

'Tis grand the song of the sea !
And you hear it where ever you roam
And where ever you may be,
It sings " The sea is your home."
As you fight with the kicking wheel
Where the long Cape grey-beards roll
The song of the sea you feel
Is embedded for life in your soul.

E. J. B., Barque " Vimeria.'

BALLYCARRY OLD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

A Successful Function.

In connection with the above Church of which Rev. W. G. Marsden is the minister, a very successful cake fair was held in the schoolhouse adjoining the church and on the grounds, on Saturday afternoon, 6th September. The weather was ideal for the purpose, and there was a very large attendance at the opening ceremony. The committee were fortunate in securing the patronage of Dr. and Mrs. Campbell, of Castle Upton–Mrs. Campbell graciously undertaking the duty of opening the sale—and of Mr. S. Magill, of Larne, who as chairman was as usual, the right man in the right place.

The Chairman (Mr. S. Magill, of Larne), gave one of those racy interesting addresses which make him so popular a personage at public functions in East Antrim. He traced the history of that congregation away back to 1613—306 years ago. Three of its ministers, he said, had occupied the pulpit for 181 years, and the succeeding four for 220 years. The longest ministry was that of Mr. Bankhead. who was in charge of the congregation for some 70 years, for 20 years of which he was assisted by that godly man whose remains lay in the green beside the church, and who had in his turn been minister for over forty years, the Rev. Mr. Glendy. That district of Templecorran, Ballycarry, amd Islandmagee had a most interesting history, and intelligent and gifted men had had their homes there. The great Dean Swift was one of these ; Wm. Orr, who had immortalised himself by writing " The Irishman," was another, and the speaker himself had memories of many worthy persons. Mr. Magill concluded

by introducing Mrs. Campbell, a lady who had done a great deal to help their struggling congregations throughout the country, and whose distinguished husband, whom they were all glad to see was also present, was a son of the manse, who, they rejoiced to know, had stuck firm and faithful to the Church of his forefathers. (Applause)

Mrs. Campbell, who was received with applause, expressed her pleasure at being present that day. She knew what a demand on the time and patience of the workers such a sale as that made. When she looked round she could well understand that they had been very busy. She hoped they would have good sales, and that the stalls would be cleared very soon. She had much pleasure in declaring the sale open, and wished it every success. (Applause.)

Mrs. Campbell was at this stage of the proceedings presented with a beautiful bouquet of flowers, Miss Bessie M'Kee discharging this duty amid applause.

Rev. W. G. Marsden, minister of the congregation, in proposing a vote of thanks to Mrs. Campbell for her kindness and graciousness in coming among them that day, said they all knew what a good friend her husband had been to the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland. The magazine published in the interests of the church was founded, and was still supported by Dr. Campbell, and the history of the church and many pamphlets on Church matters were from his gifted pen. It was Dr. Campbell who had brought all their churches together as one body with the name of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, and in 1911 he was in the movement, which would never have been brought about but for him, which resulted in the formation of the Sustentation Fund of the Church—a fund without which in the difficult times of the war many churches would have been unable to keep open. As a Church they stood for Christian freedom and such friends as Dr. and Mrs. Campbell did much for that good cause. (Applause.)

The motion was passed by hearty acclamation, as also a vote of thanks to the chairman.

At the conclusion of the opening ceremony, the ladies of the working committee in connection with the sale sprung a pleasant surprise on Mrs. Marsden by presenting her through the medium of Mrs. Campbell, with a most beautiful cushion. The gift was quite unexpected, and all present heartily endorsed the goodwill and appreciation of which it was the indication.

The following are the names of the workers in connection with the sale :—

Refreshment Stall—Miss Adrain and Miss Hamilton, assisted by Misses M. Millar, M. Connor, S. Connor, L. M'Ninch, D. M'Ninch. J. Nelson, J. M'Master, A. English, J. English, Woodside ; Mesdames Millar, Dickson M'Kinstry, and M'Clurg.

Work Stall—Mrs. W. Millar and Miss L. Service, assisted by Mrs. Shaw Millar, Misses Robinson, E. Hamilton, B. Sloan, and S. Service.

Cake Stall—Mrs. Marsden, Mrs. James Feeney, and Miss Millar, assisted by M. Hamilton.

Ice Cream—The Misses Calwell, Miss Olive Brennan, and Miss Olive Feeney.

On the green behind the Church a large tent was erected in which were given half-hour Concerts. The ladies and gentlemen, seven in number, were both very able vocalists and instrumentalists, delighting their audiences by a constantly varied programme. This very great attraction at the Cake Fair was due to the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, of Whitehead.

Palmistry—Miss Fleming who very kindly had undertaken responsibility for the Palmistry tents brought with her Miss Taylor and Mr. John M'Neill. Both the lady and Mr. M'Neill were pronounced wonderful tellers of truth by their numerous clients during the day. Mr. M'Neill was a specially striking figure in his professor's gown and mortar-board hat,

Mr. William Millar acted as doorkeeper and Mr. Alexander Millar was responsible for the arrangements in connection with the tents and stalls, assisted by Messrs. W. Millar, jun., and

other members of the congregation. Mr. Colhoun and Mr. A. Burns superintended the shooting competition; and Mr. Joseph Craig kindly lent a a gramaphone, which afforded much entertainment.

The result of the baking competition was as follows:—Soda—1, Mrs. Robert Nelson, Ballycarry; 2, Mrs. S.M'Dermot Ballycarry. Potato—1, Miss Hanna; 2, Miss S. Smyth. Jam Sandwich—1, Miss Robinson, Larne; 2, Mrs. E. H. Sturdy. Shortbread—Mrs. E. H. Sturdy; 2, Mrs. Robert M'Dowell Glenoe. Ginger Cake—1. Miss Phillip, Whitehead; 2, Mrs. E. Millar, Ballycarry. Sultana—1, Miss M. Garrett, Whitehead; 2, Miss Madge Sturdy, Ballycarry , Gingerbread (special)—Mrs. John Robinson, Larne. The judging of the competitions was ably performed by Mrs. Walker, of Belfast Technical Institute.

The proceeds will realise about £200.

Reports.

Comber.—The Rev. J. Glynne Davies, lately pastor of the Downshire Road Congregation, was on Thursday, 21st August, installed to the oversight of Comber Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church in succession to the Rev. Kenneth Dunbar. The proceedings, which were under the auspices of the Bangor Presbytery, were interesting and attended by a large congregation.

The opening exercises were conducted by the Rev. A. Whitford, who afterwards preached an admirable sermon based on the text, "Where there is no vision the people perish." The Rev. G. J. Slipper of Newry expounded the principles of Presbyterian Church Order, and the prescribed questions were put by Rev. J. A. Kelly to the minister-elect, who made a satisfactory statement in reply, Mr. J. M. Andrews, D.L., responding on behalf of the congregation. The installation prayer was offered by the Rev. A. Gordon, after which Mr. Davies was formally installed and welcomed to the Presbytery. The Rev. Thomas Dunkerley gave an inspiring and encouraging address to the new minister of his old congregation, and Rev. M. Watkins addressed the people on their privileges and responsibilities. The proceedings were brought to a close with prayer and the Benediction by Mr. Davies.

Prior to the service the Presbytery and other visitors were entertained to luncheon by the Session and Committee in the School-room adjoining the church. Mr. J. M. Andrews, D.L., presided over a large company of guests, and the usual toasts were heartily received.

Mr. Robert Milling, in a felicitous speech, gave Mr. Davies a hearty welcome to Comber and expressed the hope that his ministerial career there would be long and successful.

The Rev. Mr. Davies, in his reply spoke of his regret in leaving Banbridge and of the friendship extended to him there by all classes and creeds. He thanked the congregation of Comber for the heartiness of their welcome and looked forward with hope and confidence to his work amongst them.

Other sentiments were "The Bangor Presbytery," proposed by Mr. A. Orr, to which the Rev. A. Gordon responded. Mr. D. Munn proposed "Our Visitors," to which Rev. J. M'Kean, Rev. J. S. Houston, Rev. J. D. Lusk, and Mr. A. M'Cammon replied.

The proceedings concluded with the National Anthem.

In the evening an enjoyable social meeting and entertainment was held at which a further welcome was extended to the new minister.

Presentation from Downshire Road Congregation.

Before the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Davies from Banbridge an interesting little ceremony took place at the Manse, when Miss Smyth of Milltown, on behalf of the members of the congregation, presented them with a wallet of Treasury Notes as a parting gift and in recognition of his work amongst them during the years they had spent in Banbridge. While wishing them all happiness in their new sphere Mr. Davies was assured that much regret

had been expressed at his departure for Comber and that the members of the Congregation appreciated highly his friendship and kindness to them during his ministry here. Mr. Davies voiced his appreciation of the gift to Mrs. Davies and himself and was regretful at not having the opportunity of personally thanking all the contributors. He was much touched by their thoughtfulness and generosity, and it would add to the keenness of his sorrow at parting from them.

* *

Dromore.—The Teachers of Dromore Unitarian Sunday School and members of the Church Choir were this year again the guests of Miss Matilda and Mr. Carley Miniss, J.P. The place selected for the outing was Warrenpoint. The combined party to the number of 34, under the care and guidance of the Rev. A. Davison, travelled by motor char-a-banc. After a delightful run via Banbridge and Newry, Warrenpoint was reached by 10.30 a.m. When justice had been done to a luncheon served in excellent style in the G. N. Hotel, the company separated, some to attempt the climb to Cloughmore, others to explore the Omeath shore by boat. Those who made the climb were well repaid for their labour by the splendid view of the scenery surrounding the Carlingford Lough. On comparing notes at tea, those who had gone to Omeath determined to visit Cloughmore and vice versa. At 8.30 a start was made for home which was made all too quickly, the outing being voted the most successful yet experienced. The Teachers of Dromore Unitarian S. S. and Choir members think themselves most fortunate and feel very grateful to their kind and generous friends, Miss and Mr. Carley Miniss.

The Annual Sunday School Fete was held on Thursday, 7th August. Miss Jardine and Mr. C. Baxter with their customary kindness again placed the lawn at the disposal of the children and teachers. The weather, though very hot was delightful under the shade of the huge chestnut trees surrounding the lawn. The party, headed by the Dromore Brass Band, discoursing appropriate music, arrived at Clanmurray shortly after 3 p.m. The afternoon and evening, with an interval for refreshments, were spent in carrying out a somewhat extensive and amusing sports programme. Later in the evening the children were joined by their parents and friends, and games and dancing were engaged in till after the shades of night had fallen. The children much appreciated the kindness of a friend in providing the services of the Dromore Brass Band to enliven the occasion.

* *

Larne.—The Annual Summer Fete with Cake Fair, Sale of Work, etc., etc., was held in the Schoolroom and grounds here on 28th August, with the usual financial and social success, all ranks and denominations being represented.

The opening ceremony was performed at 3.30 o'clock, by Mrs. Ivan Magill, M.B., in introducing whom Rev. J. Kennedy had the pleasure of mentioning his unique experience in uniting in matrimony a young couple each of whom had taken the University Degree of Bachelor of Medicine, viz., Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Magill, the former only surviving son of Mr. and Mrs. Magill of Larne, the latter a member of an influential family belonging to Banbridge. Mr. and Mrs. Magill's other son, Herbert, made the supreme sacrifice in France. Mrs. Ivan Magill, M.B., in graceful and cultured tones expressed her pleasure in partaking in the festivities of the day, her appreciation of the benevolence of the congregation in devoting the proceeds of such efforts and the proceeds of Sacred Concerts every year since the outbreak of hostilities to war charities, and on account of which the members of the working committee of the choir and the organist each deserved the D.S.O., though she was equally sure that each would be better pleased by a generous and hearty effort now for the benefit of their own venerable church,

The minister very cordially acknowledged Mrs. Ivan Magill's services and thanked the many members of other churches in the large assembly present. Later in the afternoon Mr. Holmes, Organist, assisted by Mr. Jim Streight, Violinist, gave a short but very delightful Recital on his organ in the church. The items rendered including one new to Larne audiences viz, "Overture in D" by John Kenross, which was pronounced by musically educated ladies who were fortunate enough to be present, exquisite. In the evening, Mr. Ralph Hayes' Orchestra dispensed sweet and lively music outside to which youths and maidens on the green sward responded with "light fantastic toe," and a large crowd being now assembled and lights streaming from surrounding windows and lamps suspended from the trees made the entire scene very brilliant indeed.

* *

Newry.—The Sunday School Anniversary and Floral Service was held on Sunday, August 24th. The church was very prettily decorated with plants, ivy and a quantity of sweet peas which were most beautiful and fragrant. It is hoped that the custom of beautifying the church for this occasion (which was only commenced a few years ago) and so endeavouring to make it stand out in the memories of the children, will be always carried out and be co-operated in by the members of the congregation, for this will help to revive the spirit and interest of all in the Sunday School, which after all is really the most necessary part of a church if it is to succeed. Nothing in regard to the welfare of the Sunday School should be counted too much trouble. The children sang appropriate hymns (taken from the New Hymnal) very well indeed, and the Rev. G. J. Slipper delivered a beautiful address. The collection was in aid of the Sunday School and realised £1 more than last year. Altogether the simple service was quite a success. The flowers were afterwards sent to the Newry Hospital.

* *

Unity Guild.—The last picnic this season of the Unity Guild was held on Saturday September 6th, to Colin Mountain, and again we were favoured with a fine afternoon for our outing. On reaching the top of the mountain after a strenuous effort to some members of the party, we were rewarded with a magnificent view of the surrounding country. But as our faith in the "Clerk of the Weather" was not strong enough to allow us to risk having our tea out of doors we returned to the Court House at Dunmurry which was kindly placed at our disposal by the Dunmurry Congregation. After tea we just had time for a visit to the church and a stroll through the village before returning home. The opening night of the Winter Session will be held on October 8th, in the Central Hall at 8 o'clock. Invitations for which have already been issued.

"The Articles of Religion," says Archdeacon Pooler, "deal to a great extent with questions that the world has outgrown. Theology and metaphysics will not again come into their own until the Church puts the teaching of Jesus in regard to the Kingdom of God into the forefront of her doctrine."

* *

Canon N. Pierce, the vicar of Brighton, told his congrgation, in his sermon last week, that during his recent visit to Cologne he had found all classes of Germans throwing themselves with energy into the work of Reconstruction. "I learned that in many of the branches of manufacture in Germany, many of the workmen are consenting to work eleven hours a day, in order to increase Production." It manifests a patriotic spirit.

NOT indeed so self-sacrificing a one as that of those Italian railwaymen who are every day giving an hour's overtime GRATUITOUSLY, in order to expedite the transport of food and other necessaries of life. Yet at any rate a vivid contrast to the unpatriotic spirit of men(?) in another country, who go on strike at the moment when every accustomed hour of their labour is urgently required for the needs of their nation.

MARRIAGE.

MAGRATH—KEILLER—On 13th September, 1919, at Rosemary Street First Presbyterian Church, by the Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., John George Magrath, M.C., M.M., Captain M.G.C., Clonkeen House, Clones, second son of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Magrath, Legar Crescent, Clones, to Marjorie, elder daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Keiller, Abercorn Street, Belfast.

DEATH.

WARNOCK—On August 26th, 1919, at Ballybrian, Greyabbey, Hugh Warnock, in the ninetieth year of his age.

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